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FACT SHEET ON WOMEN'S EARNINGS IN POOR FAMILIES.
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IN 1964 THERE WERE 6.8 MILLION FAMILIES LIVING IN POVERTY. THE INCIDENCE OF POVERTY AMONG FAMILIES WOULD BE GREATER, HOWEVER, IF IT WERE NOT FOR THE CONTRIBUTION MADE BY WORKING WIVES TO FAMILY INCOME. NEARLY 5 MILLION OF THE FAMILIES LIVING IN POVERTY WERE HUSBAND-WIFE FAMILIES. OF ALL HUSBAND-WIFE FAMILIES, ONLY 6 PERCENT WERE POOR IF THE WIFE WORKED. ALMOST 2 MILLION OF THE 5 MILLION FAMILIES HEADED BY A WOMAN WERE POOR. DEGREE OF POVERTY WAS RELATED TO THE AMOUNT OF TIME THE WOMAN WAS EMPLOYED. AMONG ALL WIVES NOT LIVING ON FARMS, 59 PERCENT OF NONWHITE AND 43 PERCENT WHITE WORKED SOMETIME IN 1964. THE DIFFERENCE IN THE PROPORTION OF WHITE AND NONWHITE WIVES WHO WORKED GENERALLY DIMINISHED AS THE FAMILY INCOME LEVEL ROSE, EXCEPT AT $10,000 AND OVER. IN MARCH 1965, 57 PERCENT OF EMPLOYED WOMEN HEADS OF POOR FAMILIES WORKED IN SERVICE OCCUPATIONS, BUT AMONG ALL EMPLOYED FEMALE HEADS OF FAMILIES, ONLY 30 PERCENT WERE IN SERVICE WORK, AND 43 PERCENT WERE IN PROFESSIONAL, CLERICAL, OR SALES OCCUPATIONS. THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATES AMONG WOMEN HEADS OF FAMILIES WERE 12.9 PERCENT IN POOR FAMILIES AND 2.6 PERCENT IN NON-POOR FAMILIES. INFORMATION IS BASED ON DATA FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE, THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION, AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR. (FP)

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
WOMEN'S BUREAU
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FACT SHEET ON WOMEN'S EARNINGS IN POOR FAMILIES

There were 6.8 million families living in poverty in 1964.1/ These families included 8.5 million women and 6.8 million men 16 years of age and over, and 13.7 million children under 16 years of age. An additional 3.8 million families were counted among the near poor. The incidence of poverty among families would be greater, however, if it were not for the contribution made by working wives to family income.

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Nearly 5 million of the families living in poverty in 1964 were husband-wife families. Of all husband-wife families, only 6 percent were poor if the wife was in the paid labor force; 14 percent were poor if she was not. About 20 percent of the nonwhite husband-wife families were poor if the wife was in the paid labor force; 42 percent, if she was not. In contrast, only 4 percent of the white husband-wife families were poor if the wife worked; 12 percent, if she did not.

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Almost 2 million of the 5 million families headed by a woman in 1964 were living in poverty. The incidence of poverty is less if the head of the family is employed. In 1964 only 23 percent of the families headed by a woman were poor if the head was employed (15 percent among white families, 47 percent among nonwhite families). In contrast, nearly half of these families were poor if the woman head was unemployed or not in the labor force (42 percent among white families, 78 percent among nonwhite).

1/ The figures in this report are based on the Social Security Administration index of poverty, which assumes that a 4-person nonfarm family with annual cash income of less than $3,130 and a 4-person farm family with annual cash income of less than $2,195 live in poverty. The criteria for near poverty are: between $3,130 and $4,075 annual cash income for a 4-person nonfarm family and between $2,195 and $2,865 annual cash income for a 4-person farm family. Both indexes are adjusted to take family size into account. The criteria are adjusted from year to year to make allowances for price changes.

NOTE.--The figures in this fact sheet are from the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Social Security Administration, Social Security Bulletins, April 1966 and May 1966, and U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Special Labor Force Report No. 64.

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The year-round employment of women who head their families greatly reduces the likelihood of their children experiencing poverty. In 1964, 40 percent of the children under 18 years of age in families headed by a woman were poor if the woman worked 50 to 52 weeks; 67 percent, if she worked 1 to 49 weeks; and 75 percent, if she did not work at all. The most disadvantaged children were found in families headed by a nonwhite woman who did not work at any time in 1964; 90 percent of these children were living in poverty.

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A higher proportion of nonwhite than white wives (husband present) contribute to family income. Among all wives not living on farms, 59 percent of nonwhite and 43 percent of white worked at some time in 1964. The difference in the proportion with work experience was considerably greater at poverty levels. At a family income of less than $2,000 or $3,000, for example, nonwhite wives were more than twice as likely to work as white wives. The difference in the proportion of white and nonwhite wives who worked in 1964 generally diminished as the family income level rose, except at $10,000 and over. Moreover, the higher the family income the greater the likelihood that the family had a working wife, as shown in the following table.

Family income in 1964	Percent of nonfarm wives with work experience	
	White	Nonwhite
Total	43.3	59.1
Under $2,000	21.9	50.3
$2,000 to $2,999	25.4	53.9
$3,000 to $4,999	35.7	53.9
$5,000 to $6,999	40.1	63.2
$7,000 to $9,999	48.5	65.3
$10,000 and over	52.5	72.9

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In March 1965, 57 percent of the woman heads of poor families who were employed were in service work--27 percent in private-household work and 30 percent in other service work. In contrast, among <u>all</u> employed female heads of families only 30 percent were in service work and 43 percent were in professional, clerical, or sales occupations. Nonwhite women family heads were the most disadvantaged occupationally; 75 percent of those in poverty were employed in service work--44 percent in private-household work and 31 percent in other service jobs.

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Unemployment is a major factor in poverty. The unemployment rates among woman heads of families in March 1965 were 12.9 percent in poor families and 2.6 percent in nonpoor families. The comparable unemployment rates for male heads of families were 7 percent and 2.6 percent. Nonwhite female heads of poor families were the most likely to be unemployed; their unemployment rate was 14.5 percent in March 1965.